

A Comprehensive Study of “*Dasha-Rajana War*” and its Effect on Rigved

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Introduction:

Rigved consists of many mythical stories, but the most prominent one is the immortal God **Indra** smiting numerous **Vritras** throughout the period of **Ten Mandalas**. Hence this aspect served the base for the composition of many **Songs of Praise** on the occasion of **Yajna**.

Apart from the frequent narration of fictional conflicts between the Rigvedic Deities and the demonic characters like **Vritra** (personification of drought) and serpent **Ahi**, the generations of Poets in their composed poems have also reported some factual incidences, but they are scattered in different hymns. Hence it is necessary to locate and collect the bits and pieces of information provided by them about a **character** or an **event of interest** and then analyse the same in a proper context to arrive at appropriate decision.

Among the several real stories, *Dasha-Rajana* or the **War of Ten Kings** is the most noteworthy event mentioned in the **Mandala-7 of Rigved**. As it reflects the conflict between two warring factions of the ruling people/tribes of Rigvedic Period, it has generated a very wide interest among the readers of the Indian Origin ancient text.

However, due to tangential descriptions of the several real incidences explained using archaic Sanskrit words that too in the form of figurative language add complexity to the subject and therefore, make the topics difficult to study and analyse as different persons interpret the same verse in a different manner. One way to improve understanding is, to get deeply involved into the archaic words/phrases and minutely observe the contexts of their use so as to know many unexplored or potential meanings of the words/terms employed by the Poets that could be different from someone else has already inferred. In true sense, **Rigvedic Poems** do test the **patience and perseverance of a reader** before revealing the real intents of the Poets.

Although, the **War of Ten Kings** is one of the most widely discussed topics of **Rigved**, due to its ambiguous nature, still it comes under the category of the **Various Shades of Grey**.

The main aim of this essay is to bring the information available in the ancient document specifically related to the **War of Ten Kings/ Dasha-Rajana** at one place including; **A. The conditions prevailing in the Rigvedic Territory prior to the War; B. The description about the Dasha-Rajana War; and C. The Post-war developments reflected in Mandala-7.**

A. The conditions prevailing in the Rigvedic Territory prior to Dasha-Rajana War:

Even though the proper description about the **War of Ten Kings** is found in **Mandala-7**, but the information on the setting of war is also present in **Mandala-3** and **Mandala-6** that were composed earlier to **Mandala-7**. This has the basis of presence of the references of king **Sudasa** in **Mandala-3** verses who was the leader of **Bharata tribe** during **Mandala-7** period.

Mandala-3 verse **Rv-3.53,11** [1, 2] given below talks about the situation prevailed before the war for king **Sudasa** who led the **Bharatas** in **Mandala-7** war and hence he is generally considered as the real **War Hero** (also see **Appendix 'A'** for more information).

RV-3.53,11: उपप्रेतं कुशिकाश्चेतयध्वमश्वं राये प्र मुञ्चता सुदासः । राजा वृत्रं जङ्घन्तु प्रागपागुदगथा यजाते वर आ पृथिव्याः ॥

*upa preta kuśikāścetayadhvamaśvaṃ rāye pra muñcatā sudāsaḥ /
rājā vṛtram jaṅghanat prāghapāghudaghathā yajāte vara ā prthivyāḥ //*

Come forward, **Kusikas**, and be attentive; let loose **Sudas's** horse to win him riches.

East, west, and north, let the King slay the foeman, then at earth's choicest place perform his worship.

Meanings of the three key words used by the Poet in the original verse are as under.

1. *prāgapāgudagathā*: / प्रागपागुदगथा-- *prach*/East, *apach*/West, *udach*/North directions.
2. *vṛtram*/ वृत्र-- a foe or an enemy (but not the atmospheric demon **Vritra**).
3. *vara ā prthivyāḥ*/ वर आ पृथिव्याः-- the best place on Earth.

Mandala-3 Poet belonging to **Visvamitra** clan in the verse **Rv-3.23,4** has described **Ilaspade** as the probable location that could fulfil the criterion of *vara ā prthivyāḥ*.

Interpretation: Poet of the verse **Rv-3.53,11** wants to convey that although in the three major directions (east, west and north), the enemies are going to oppose upward movement of **Sudasa** who is presently stationed at **southern region**, but at any cost, he must overcome them and perform **Yajna** in the **Ilaspade** region. The Poet has enigmatically described the futuristic victory of the king as '**Asva of Sudasa has to move freely in that region**' which indirectly means, **Ashva** of the king can enjoy the freedom only when **Ilaspade** area comes under the control of king **Sudasa**. It also communicates us that **Sudasa** needs to go for War.

Above description may be taken as the **wishful thinking** of the Poet because at that particular moment, actual war was yet to start. In all probabilities, the members of Priestly Community were pestering **Sudasa** to capture the **Ilaspade** area located in northern direction as it was the **most auspicious place** where their ancestors lived once and wherein the rivers like **Apaya** and **Drisadvati** joined their most beloved river **Saraswati** (see **Rv-3.23,4**).

A new question arises, **who are the enemies of the Bharatas?**

The Poets of **Mandal-6** and **Mandal-7** in the following verses have cryptically described the enemies of king **Sudasa** (without naming).

Rv-6.22,10: ययादासान्यार्याणि वृत्रा करो / *yayā dāsānyāryāṇi vṛtrā karo.*

Rv-6.33,3: अमित्रान्दासां वृत्राण्यार्या च शूर / *amitrān dāsā vṛtrāṇyāryā ca śūra.*

Rv-6.60,6: हतोवृत्राण्यार्या हतोदासांनिसत्पती । *hato vṛtrāṇyāryā hato dāsāni satpatī .*

Rv-7.83,1: दासां च वृत्रा हतमार्याणि च/ *dāsā ca vṛtrā hatamāryāṇi ca.*

In the above verses, the Composers of **Mandala-6** and **7** did not name anyone by name, but collectively called the **Aryas** and the **Dasas** as the **foes**. **How is it possible?**

However, the most intriguing thing here is, the Poets have used the word **Vritra** as an adjective to denote an unknown group or a class of the **Arya** as the **adversaries** or the **trouble makers** for the **Priests**. It means to say that in the afore-mentioned four verses, the term **Vritra** stands for a barrier, an obstacle or an impeder or hurdle and not to be taken as the **usual demon Vritra** who is generally believed to have taken water of the whole world in his captivity. Hence the **pre-Rigvedic Rishis** created God **Indra** to kill the **atmospheric demon** (refer to hymns **Rv-4.17** to **19** and also see the verse **Rv-8.89,5** that depicts the purpose of creation of **Indra**).

Therefore, in the above four verses, the term **Vritra** manifests the **Aryas having crooked mind** or may be taken as **Vritra Mentality of the Arya People**. As far as the Rigvedic Priests are concerned, here, in totality, the **opponents of Poets** can be named as the **Bad Aryas**.

Similarly, in the above four verses, the meaning of the word **Dasa** is not the same as the characters the **Dasas** and **Dasyus** who arrive at the site of **Yajna** as the uninvited beings and then create problem during the ritual or disturb the function. As the **Dasas** are clubbed with the **Bad Aryas**, they can be seen as the persons or tribes that are **aligned with the Bad Aryas**.

Following two verses taken from **Mandala-7** would make the picture clear [1].

Rv-7.33,7: *trayaḥ kṛṇvanti bhuvaneṣu retastisraḥ prajā āryā jyotiraghrāḥ /*

trayo gharmāsa uṣasaṃ sacante sarvānit tānanuvidurvasiṣṭhāḥ //

Three fertilize the worlds with genial moisture: **three noble creatures cast a light** before them.

Three that give warmth to all attend the morning. All these have they **discovered, these Vasisthas**.

In the verse **Rv-7.33,7**; the Poet **Vasistha** has hinted at, during that era, but before the start of actual war, in the **Rigvedic Territory**, out of the several realms, there were **only three independent kingdoms of the Aryas who favoured the ancient Vedic Philosophy**. The Poet has cryptically described them as *tisrah prajā āryā jyotiraghrāḥ* / the **three distinct Arya Peoples who seek light/ प्रजा आर्याज्योतिरग्राः**. It means to say that **three people** (the word **Praja/ प्रजा** stands for People/Races/Tribes/Subjects and the phrase **आर्याज्योतिरग्राः** means the **Aryas** who are the light/truth seekers or the knowledge-oriented) **showed interest in Ideology**.

Out of the **three tribes**, the **Bharatas** take the first positions. This is because, since inception of the **Yajna rituals**, the **Five Kings** of the **Bharata tribe** have patronized the **functions**. Then the **Trutsus** who are known to **Vasistha**, become **second Arya clan People**. As in the hymn **Rv-7.33**; there is no mention of the **third group of Arya tribe who had liking for Vedic Ideology**, hence nothing can be said about it.

Mandala-7 Poet in the verse **Rv-7.83,1** belonging to one of the war hymns has requested **Indra-Varuna**, the duo to destroy the personal enemies of king **Sudasa** who happened to be the **Dasas**, and the **Aryas who used to behave like Vritra**.

Rv-7.83,1: *yuvāṃ narā paśyamānāsa āpyaṃ prācā ghavyantaḥ pṛthuparśavo yayuḥ /
dāsā ca vṛtrā hatamāryāṇi ca sudāsamindrāvaruṇāvasāvatam //*

युवां नरापश्यमानासु आप्यं प्राचा गव्यन्तः पृथुपर्शवोययुः। दासां च वृत्रा हतमार्याणि च सुदासमिन्द्रावरुणावसावतम् //

Looking to you and your alliance, O ye Men, armed with broad axes they went forward, fain for spoil.

Ye smote and slew his Dasa and his Aryan enemies, and helped Sudas with favour, Indra-Varuna.

From the above two **Mandala-7** references, it can be concluded that, although some people belonged to the **class of the Arya**, still their behaviour was like **dragon Vritra**. Hence it is essential to know more about the **Aryas** who always posed a challenge to the **Priests** and also **Bharatas**. **Mandala-6** verse **Rv-6.22,10** provides proper clue about the same.

RV-6.22,10: *ā saṃyatamindra ṇaḥ svastiṃ śatrutūryāya bṛhatīmamṛdhrām |
yayā dāsānyāryāṇi vṛtrā karo vajrin sutukā nāhusāni //*

Poet in the above verse, has liked some un-identified **Aryas** who have **mind-set of Vritra** to the ancient king **Nahusha/Nahusa**. Therefore, it can be said that, there were the **Aryas** who happened to be the **descendants of Nahusha**, yet regularly opposed the philosophy (*beliefs and practices*) of the **Rigvedic Priests**.

Now, here the next question comes up, in **Rigved**, who are related to king **Nahusa/Nahusha**? Again, the **Mandala-6** verse **Rv-6.46,7** comes to our help.

RV-6.46,7: *yadindra nāhuṣīṣvānojo nṛmṇam ca kṛṣṭiṣu /*

yad vāpañca kṣitīnām dyumnamā bhara satrā viśvāni paumṣyā ||

यदिन्द्रनाहुषीष्वौजो नृमणं च कृष्टिषु । यद्वापञ्च क्षितीनां द्युम्नमा भर सत्रा विश्वानिपौस्या ः ॥

All strength and valour that is found, Indra, in **tribes of Nahusas**, and **all the splendid fame that the Five Tribes enjoy**.

Bring, yea, all manly powers at once.

Here the meanings of the two archaic Sanskrit words are as under [2].

Krishti means -the Races of man or Men,

Kshiti means- habitation, nations, dwelling places, estate, dominion, colonies.

Interpretation: **Bharadwaja**, the Composer in above verse brings out the fact that **the races** or the **tribes of Nahusha** possess strength and valour like their ancestor, but they are the strong enemies (**सत्रा**) of the Priests. Their **Five colonies/nations/habitations** are known to many. Poet appealed to **Indra** to bring these **manly powers** together to the place of **Yajna**.

In the next verse of same hymn **Rv-6.46,8**; the Poet has included three different names of the **People**, i.e. **Triski**, **Puru** and **Druhyu** and described them as the possessors of **bullish power**, hence requested **Indra** to bestow the Priests enough strength so as to subdue all of them in the battles (**pritsu**) as they are unfriendly (**अमित्रान**) with them, means **their sworn enemies**.

From the discussion on the **three verses** of **Mandala-6** pertaining to the **foes of Poets** who are related to the ancient king **Nahusha**, it becomes apparent that the **Five Tribes of Nahusa** are the **Aryas** but **possessed the quality of Vritra**. Moreover, Poets expressed their desire to defeat the **Five Races** in the battles as they are **unfriendly** with the **Rigvedic Priests**.

As the story goes, after the death of **pre-Rigvedic mighty king Nahusha**, his kingdom was divided into **Five Separate Countries** and given to the **First Generation Leaders of Five Tribes/People** (**Anu, Druhyu, Puru, Turvasa and Yadu**) that made them independent kings.

In sum, based on the references of **Mandala-6** and **7**; it can be said that prior to the **War of Ten Kings**, there were **Five Tribes related to king Nahusha**, lived in the **Rigvedic Territory** to whom the Poets have designated as the **Aryas** who strongly opposed the spread of **Vedic Philosophy** (also applicable to the expansion of the **Bharata's realm**) and hence the Poets have intentionally called them having the **nature of Vritra (Bad Aryas)**.

Similar feature is also noted in the **Last Mandala** verse **Rv-10.69,6** wherein **Arya** has been portrayed as having **mentality of Vritra** means opposition to **advancement of the Vedic Ideology/People**.

Once it is known that since **pre-Rigvedic period**, there were the **Aryas** who too lived in the **Rigvedic Territory** and opposed the **Vedic Doctrine of the pre-Rigvedic Rishis**, then it is necessary to find out what exactly they did not like about the **beliefs and practices** of the Priests. Poets of the **Mandala-7**; in two verses of separate hymns have explained two features of Vedic Ideology that the **Ten Kings opposed**. In the verse **Rv-7.18,16** the Poet has termed the **Ten Kings** as *Anindra* means the People who did not believe in God **Indra (Indra Denier as per Griffith)**. However, the Poet of the verse **Rv-7.83,7** has called the **Ten kings** have no faith in **Yajna** ritual. It means to say that the **Ten Kings** did not agree with the Priestly people about these two key principles or tenets (**Indra** and **Yajna**) of the **Vedic Philosophy**.

It is to be noted here that, out of the **Ten Kings**, the main focus of the **Rigvedic Poets** of the **Five Early Mandala** is on the **Five Tribes of Nahusha** as the Priests always considered or counted them as **the part of category of Aryas**.

Preparedness for the Future War implicitly described in the Hymn Rv-6.75

On the basis of the **Family Tree of the Bharata clan**, the sequence of the compositions of the **Five Early Mandalas** is found to be; **Mandala-2; 3; 4; 6; and 7**. Hence it can be said that **Mandala-6** precedes the **Mandala-7**.

Hymn **Rv-6.75** is the last hymn of **Mandala-6**, wherein the Poet has described the various **Weapons** and equipment that are likely to be used in the up-coming war. In means to say that, sometime before the **War of Ten Kings**, in the Poetic style, the Composer has taken the proper stock of the weapons available with the Warrior Class People or the **Bharatas** and also **highlighted their functions**. The Poet has also depicted what a Priest can do in a war.

Once it is considered that **Mandala-7** followed **Mandala-6**, then the hymn **Rv-6.75** aptly fits into the place given to it by the Composer/Compiler of **Rigved**.

Please note that the description given about the different weapons and their vital components in the hymn **Rv-6.75** provides wordy picture of the **real weapons** used by the Men of that time and no way similar to **Vajra/Thunder-bolt**, an imaginary weapon often used by the mythical but immortal and invisible God **Indra** to slay the mortal demon **Vritra**.

Hymn **Rv-6,75** consists of **19 verses** in total, and **Table-1** provides a brief outline of the various weapons and equipment that were employed by the ancient Warriors [1].

Table-1

Verse Number	Weapon or its parts	Description about various weapons, their different parts, and Asva and Ratha with the essential accessories used in the War
Rv-6.75,1	Armour	Like a rain-cloud, the armour covers body of an advancing fighter and protects him from the weapons thrown at him.
Rv-6.75,2	Bow	Bow can make the warriors to win cattle, localities in the battles as its effective use causes serious injuries to the foes.
Rv-6.75,3	Bow-string	In pulled state, bow-string comes closer to an ear, as if like a woman, it wants to whisper in the ear of its user.
Rv-6.75,4	Bow-ends	Two ends of a bow come closer to each other when the string is pulled and move away when an arrow is released.
Rv-6.75,5	Quiver	Quiver is placed on the back of an archer that houses many daughters and sons, practically means the arrows.
Rv-6.75,6	Reins	When a charioteer stands on a Ratha, he holds reins in his hands, then guides and controls the movements of vehicle using the reins.
Rv-6.75,7	Asvas	Asvas neigh loudly and raise the dust with their hooves. When yoked to Rathas, together they create fear in the minds of enemies.
Rv-6.75,8	Ratha	Ratha bearer has placed his armour and weapons in the Ratha and is ready to offer/use them (like giving oblation) in the battle.
Rv-6.75,9	Forefathers of the Warriors	It is due to their fathers/ancestors , the warriors possess vigour, strength and skills to handle the weapons to defeat their enemies in the war.
Rv-6.75,10	Ancestors of the Priests/ Brahmins	Brahmins /Forefathers, deserve the Soma juice as they have imparted knowledge to the Priests. Pushan must guard the Priests from evils.
Rv-6.75,11	Arrow	The arrow has eagle's wings with a sharp tooth like a wild animal at the end. It is fitted onto a shaft. Upon firing, it aids in movement of arrow.
Rv-6.75,12	An enemy arrow	Arrows coming straight from the enemy should not hit the Priests. Their bodies should become hard like a stone. Soma and Aditi to help them.
Rv-6.75,13	Whip	A whip hits Asva hard on its back and thighs, and makes it to move fast.
Rv-6.75,14	Bow-string application	Like a snake, using his forearm, a warrior coils a bow-string on the both ends of a Bow. Warrior knows how to protect a bow while fixing string.
Rv-6.75,15	Tip of an arrow	An arrow has a metal tip smeared with poison to kill a foe instantly.
Rv-6.75,16	Flying arrow	When a bow string is released, an arrow flies away and hits the target.
Rv-6.75,17	Wartime situation	In war, arrows fly like hair of boys. Aditi and Brahmanaspati guard them.
Rv-6.75,18	Use of an Armour and Soma in war	Armour is used to protect vital parts of Body, but Soma gives immortality. May Varuna give wider space and may gods become joyful after victory.
Rv-6.75,19	Prayer as armour	A foe or a known person can kill a Priest, but the prayer is his best armour.

After going through the concise information given in the **Table-1**, it becomes evident that the verses that describe identical topics are not placed one below the other. It means that, to achieve continuity in the flow of information provided by the Poet, if these verses are re-arranged subject-wise, then a reader would experience coherency or continuity in the content. Verse numbers related to different topics are given below.

Bow: 2, 14, 3, 4, 5.

Arrow: 11, 15, 16.

Asva and Ratha: 7, 8, 6, 13.

Use of Armour: 1, 18.

Wartime situation: 17, 12.

Traditional activities of the Warrior and Priestly class: 9, 10, 19.

The probable sequence of the 19 verses of the hymn would become as under.

A new sequence of the Verses: 2, 14, 3, 4, 5, 11, 15, 16, 7, 8, 6, 13, 1, 18, 17, 12, 9, 10, 19.

It is generally said that the hymn **Rv-6.75** was composed long-time after the completion of majority of hymns of **Mandala-6**, and was inserted in that Mandala very late.

Contents of the verses indicate that the members of Royal class of that time often used **Asva drawn Ratha** for better mobility, and the **Bow and Arrows** to attack the enemies from a long distance. As there is no mention of Sword, Spear and Mace in the complete hymn, means the weapons commonly used by the **foot-soldiers** during one-to-one fight are not covered. As a tip of an arrow is applied with poisonous substance (see verse **Rv-6.75,15**), probably to avoid an accidental contact of an archer to it, a tip was covered with a cap made of cow-hide.

As per the verse **Rv-6.75,9**; the warriors/Kshatriyas inherit valour, strength and military capabilities from their ancestors. Likewise, verse **Rv-6.75,10** describes that the Priests have learned the knowledge they possessed from their forefathers. It means to say that, the generations of the Warriors and Priests have been doing the same work as that of their ancestors. Therefore, in the verse **Rv-6.75,19**; the Poet has made it very clear that the **Prayer is his armour**. It means, in the war, a Priest is just a spectator who can conduct **Yajna** only.

Someone has rightly said “**if you want peace, then prepare for War**”. Similarly, the Poet through the hymn **Rv-6.75**; informs us about the readiness of Warriors for the future War.

B. Description about the War of Ten Kings/ दशराज्ञ युद्धः

In **Mandala-7**; there are three hymns **Rv-7.18**; **Rv-7.33** and **Rv-7.83** composed by the Poets of **Vasistha clan** provide brief account of the **War of Ten Kings/ dāśarājña**.

Out of the three hymns mentioned above, hymn **Rv-7.18** gives relatively detailed description of the two separate battles that occurred on the banks of two different rivers of **Rigvedic Territory**. Hence we shall discuss both battles separately.

1. Main Battle fought against the Ten Kings on the bank of river Parushni:

In the hymn **Rv-7.18**; Poet **Vasistha** has identified the enemies of **Bharata king Sudasa** that are generally grouped as the **Ten Kings** and the **Table-2** provides information on the same.

Table-2: The Enemies of king Sudasa as described in the hymn Rv-7.18 [1]

Verse number of the hymn Rv-7.18	Names of the enemies appear in the said verse	Description about the deeds of enemies and the acts performed by Trutsu, Sudasa and Indra (?).
5	Simyu	Hater of the prayer or praise songs of the Priests.
6	Turvasa, Druhyu, Bhrigu	Turvasa was ready to accept the supremacy of Indra and perform Yajna in the name of god, but probably prevented by the duo Druhyu and Bhrigu.
7	Pakhtas, Bhalanas, Alinas, Visanins and Shivas	When the gang of these five foes attacked Sudasa, then Trutsu, the friend of the Aryas arrived there.
11	Vaikarnas	One and twenty persons from Vaikarna family were struck down by the king (who? Sudasa or Indra?).
12	Shruta, old Kashava, Anu, Druhyu	Indra helped his close friends and used Vajra to drown the foes who came forward in a group.
13	Anu, Puru	Indra transferred the place of Anu's son to Trutsu and the Poet (with Sudasa) won the ill-spoken Puru.
14	Anu and Druhyu	Indra flattened the Cow-seeker enemies numbering sixty hundred, six thousand, six and sixty.
15	Un-known	Indra guided Trutsus to route the foes who ran away from the battle-field like water rushes downward. Sudasa took over the things left by the adversaries.

Note: Simyu, the opponent of the Poems composed by Poet could be from Bhrigu clan as at that time, the latter had become the friends of Druhyu, the sworn enemy of Sudasa (refer to verses Rv-7.18,5 and 6).

Information given in **Table-2**, makes it apparent that more than the king **Sudasa**, the Poet has credited the victory of **Bharatas** in the **War of Ten Kings** to God **Indra**.

Apart from the hymn **Rv-7.18**; information on the **Dasha-Rajana** War is also present in the hymns **Rv-7.33** and **Rv-7.83**. Related verses are placed below.

Rv-7.33,3: So, verily, with these he crossed the river, in company with these he slaughtered **Bheda**.

So in the fight with the **Ten Kings**, **Vasisthas**! did **Indra** help **Sudas** through your devotions.

Rv-7.33,5: Like thirsty men they looked to heaven, in battle with the **Ten Kings**, surrounded and imploring.

Then **Indra** heard **Vasistha** as he praised him, and gave the **Trtsus** ample room and freedom.

Rv-7.83,6: The men of both the hosts invoked you in the fight, **Indra** and **Varuna**, that they might win the wealth.

What time ye helped **Sudas**, with all the *Trtsu* folk, when the **Ten Kings** had pressed him down in their attack

Rv-7.83,8: O **Indra-Varuna**, ye gave **Sudas** your aid when the **Ten Kings** in battle compassed him about.

There where the white-robed **Trtsus** with their braided hair, skilled in song worshipped you with homage and with hymn.

Additionally, in the two verses of the hymn **Rv-7.18**; **Parushni** the name of river on whose bank the war was fought are given below.

RV-7.18,8: Fools, in their folly fain to waste her waters, they parted inexhaustible **Parusni**.

Lord of the Earth, he with his might repressed them: still lay the herd and the affrighted herdsman.

Rv-7.18,9: As to their goal they sped to their destruction: they sought **Parusni**; even the swift returned not.

Indra abandoned, to **Sudas** the manly, the swiftly flying foes, unmanly babblers

In this way, the Poets from **Vasistha** family in the three hymns of **Mandala-7** have cryptically described the major activities occurred during the **dāśarājña** war.

2. Second Battle on the bank of river Yamuna:

After defeating several kings in the major war on the bank of river **Parushni**, the joint army of **Sudasa** and **Trutsu** then moved in the **eastern direction** to take on the separate group of enemies on the bank of river **Yamuna**. And there, they clashed with **Bheda** and his associates, namely **Ajas**, **Sigrus** and **Yaksus** and forced them to concede the defeat. In this way, **Bharata king Sudasa** with the help of **Trutsus** could overcome the enemies who were present in the **east, west** and **north** directions that are hinted at the **Mandala-3** verse **Rv-3.53,11**. **Griffith** translated verses that deal with the battle on the bank of **Yamuna** are given below.

Rv-7.18,18: To thee have all thine enemies submitted: even the fierce **Bheda** hast thou made thy subject.

Cast down thy sharpened thunderbolt, O Indra, on him who harms the men who sing thy praises.

Rv-7.18,19: **Yamuna** and the **Trtsus** aided Indra. There he stripped **Bheda** bare of all his treasures.

The **Ajas** and the **Sigrus** and the **Yaksus** brought in to him as tribute heads of horses.

Rv-7.83,4: With your resistless weapons, Indra-Varuna, ye conquered **Bheda** and ye gave **Sudas** your aid.

Ye heard the prayers of these amid the cries of war: effectual was the service of the Trtsus' priest.

The most important point about these wars is, the close association of the Poet of the hymn **Rv-7.18** with both battles. This is because, in no other Rigvedic hymn, we find so many names of the tribes that too, when the tribes like **Pakhtas, Bhalanas, Alinas, Visanins Shivas, Shruta, Kashava, Vaikarnas, Bhedas Ajas, Sigrus** and **Yaksus** are seen first time in the **Five Early Mandalas**. This has the exception of the **Five Tribes of Nahusha**, namely, **Anu, Druhyu, Puru, Turvasa** and **Yadu** whose names do appear in the different hymns of **Mandala-6**. Please remember that during the period of the composition of **Mandala-6**, **Divodasa** the father of king **Sudasa** was the tribe leader of **Bharata Family**.

It is not clearly mentioned in any of the **three war hymns**, how and why so many people from the different locations assembled together to participate in the **War of Ten Kings** against king **Sudasa** and what their interest in the war was.

However, the active involvement of the **Trtsus** in both wars manifests that they were invited by the Chief Priest **Vasistha** with the sole purpose to provide military support to **Bharata king Sudasa** against the **alliance of more than Ten Kings** (see Appendix “A”).

As per the verse **Rv-7.18,6**; in the beginning, **Turvasa** one among the **Five Tribes of Rigved**, was about to attend **Yajna**, but possibly **Druhyu** and **Brighu** told him not to do so.

The most intriguing aspect of the war story is, the Poets of **Vasistha** clan have attributed the success in the two wars fought on the banks of two different rivers mainly to God **Indra** as in the all three war hymns, and the Composers have elaborated **Indra's acts**, as if the **Trtsus** and the **Bharatas** have negligible role in them. In fact, in the verse **Rv-7.18,16**; the Poet has declared that after consuming dressed oblation, **Indra** became so **aggressive** (इन्द्रो मन्तुं मन्तुम्यो/*Indro manyum manyumyo*) that then he scattered all **his non-believers (anindram)**.

As there is no mention of the types of weapons used by the various **Warring Tribes/People**, and hence here it is believed that at least the **Bharatas** would have employed the **Bows and arrows** described in the hymn **Rv-6.75**.

C. The Post-War Scenario as described in Mandala-7:

It is generally said that no individual can live in isolation for a longer time. Similarly, no kingdom can live happily without having friendly relationship with the neighbouring states. In this section, we shall discuss how the **Bharatas** treated the losers subsequent to war. But before that, we need to know what the Priests gained from the war.

Once the main purpose of the **War of Ten kings** was served, then the Priestly people became active to play their traditional role as the **performer of Yajna**. Hence they organised the first grand **Yajna** to celebrate the victory of king **Sudasa** as well as to get gifts from him.

1. Fulfilment of the dream of the Poet of the verse Rv-3.53,11:

As described in the verse **Rv-3.53,11**; the Poet from **Visvamitra** clan had dreamed to witness king **Sudasa** performing **Yajna** in the **Ilaspde** region (यजाते वर आ पृथिव्याः) of **Rigvedic Territory**. **Vasistha** the **Royal Priest of Bharatas** with the permission of king **Sudasa** decided to conduct a **big Yajna** to rejoice the triumph.

The last four verses of the war hymn **Rv-7.18 [1]** depict that after the win in the **War of Ten kings**, king **Sudasa** participated **Yajna** and gave several gifts to **Vasistha**. Hence this **Yajna** becomes the **Dana-stuti Yajna**.

22: Priest-like, with praise, I move around the altar, earning **Paijavana's reward**, O Agni,

Two hundred cows from Devavata's descendant, two chariots from **Sudas** with mares to draw them.

23: Gift of **Paijavana**, four horses bear me in foremost place, trained steeds with pearl to deck them.

Sudas's brown steeds, firmly-stepping, carry me and my son for progeny and glory.

24: Him whose fame spreads between wide earth and heaven, who, as dispenser, gives each chief his portion,

Seven flowing Rivers glorify like Indra. He slew Yudhyamadhi in close encounter.

25: Attend on him O ye heroic Maruts as on **Sudas's father Divodasa**.

Further **Paijavana's desire with favour**. Guard faithfully his lasting firm dominion.

Above verses explain that **Sudasa** gave cattle, two Ratha full of the brides, four steeds decorated with pearls etc. to **Vasistha** and other Priests. It means, on the occasion of special **Yajna**, king **Sudasa** donated several gifts to the worshippers who morally supported the **Bharatas** and **Trutsus** during the war and now involved in the organizing **Yajna** activity.

This incidence can be seen as a **dream** of the **Priestly Families of Rigved** that has come true. Although above four verses do not indicate the location of **special Yajna** conducted for **Sudasa**, probably the verse from next hymn hints at where **other Yajna** took place.

A special Yajna performed in the Puru's land

Rv-7.19,3: *tvaṃ dhr̥ṣṇo dhr̥ṣatā vītahavyaṃ prāvo viśvābhirūtibhiḥ sudāsam /
pra pa^urukutsiṃ trasadasyumāvaḥ kṣetrasātā vṛtrahatyēṣu pūrum //*

O Bold One, thou with all thine aids hast boldly helped **Sudas** whose offerings were accepted,
Puru in winning land and slaying foemen, and **Trasadasyu** son of **Purukutsa**.

Content of the above verse manifests that due to help of **Indra**, **Sudasa** could perform **Yajna** (after the victory) and **give oblations here**. To win the land of **Puru**, **Indra** had to slay many enemies/**Vritras**, but the Supreme God did not harm **Trasadasyu** the **son of Purukutsa**. It means to say that **Trasadasyu** survived in the war due to blessings of **Indra**, and hence it can be said that **Bharata king Sudasa** was contemporary of **Puru king Trasadasyu**.

In another verse **Rv-7.19,6**; there is a mention of **Sudasa** offered oblations to **Indra**, means the **Bharata king** definitely attended **Yajna**.

Special Observations:

1. In the verse **Rv-7.18,22**; (verse is a part of description on **Dana-stuti Yajna**) Poet has used Sanskrit phrase नप्तुर्देववतः to indicate **Devavata** as the ancestor of **Sudasa**.

Rv-7.18,22: *dve napturdevavataḥ śate ghordvā rathā vadhūmantā sudāsaḥ /
arhannaghne paijavanasya dānaṃ hoteva sadma paryemi rebhan //*

As per the Monier-Williams dictionary, Sanskrit word नप्तु /naptR means grandson and great grandson as well. However, following information gathered from the relevant **Early Mandalas of Rigved** would clarify the situation.

- Verse **Rv-4,15,4** informs us that **Srnjaya** is the son of **Devavata**.
- Verse **Rv-6.47,25** conveys us that **Divodasa** is the son of **Srnjaya**.
- Verse **Rv-7.18,25** intimates us that **Sudasa** is the son of **Divodasa**.

Based on the above information, logically speaking, Bharata king **Sudasa** (of Mandala-7) becomes the **great grandson of Devavata**. Hence here the word नप्तु /naptR means the **great grandson** and not the grandson. Then it becomes easy to identify **Devavata the Bharata king** of **Mandala-3** as the **son of king Bharata**. It also implies king **Bharata** was present during the composition of **Mandala-2**.

From the above information, the sequence of composition of the **Five Early Mandalas** can be easily deduced as **Mandala-2, 3, 4, 6, and 7**.

2. The Poet in the verses **Rv-7.18,22** and **23** has called **Sudasa** by a new name, **Paijavana**.

Note: For English term **Grandson**, other Sanskrit words are- *pautra*/पौत्र and *dauhitra* दौहित्र.

2. Familiarization of Yajna ritual to the Five Tribes:

Before we take up the actual references from **Mandala-7** that talk about the **Five Tribes of Rigved**, we shall take a close look at a **Mandala-5** reference that would help us in understanding the **post-war developments** that occurred in the Vedic World. Please note that among the **Six Family Mandalas**, **Mandala-5** comes the last and incidentally, it happens to be the **first out of the Five Late Mandalas**.

Rv-5.12,6: *yas te aghne namasā yajñam īṭṭa ṛtaṃ sa pāty aruṣasya vṛṣṇaḥ /
tasya kṣayah prṥthur ā sādthur etu prasarsrāṇasya nahuṣasya śeṣaḥ //*

यस ते अग्ने नमसा यज्ञम ईट्ट रतं स पात्य अरुषस्य वर्ष्णः । तस्य कषयः पर्थुर आ साधुर एतु परसर्साणस्य नहुषस्य शेषः ॥

Here a question is, what does the phrase **Nahushasya Sheshah/नहुषस्य शेषः** mean?

As discussed earlier, in the **War of Ten Kings**, the combined army of **Sudasa** and **Trutsus** defeated several foes that included the **Five Tribes of Rigved**. We have also seen that the **Mandala-6** Poet in the verse **Rv-6.46,7** has linked the **Five Tribes** (**Anu**, **Druhyu**, **Puru**, **Turvasa**, and **Yadu**) to the ancient king **Nahusha**. Therefore, it can be said that the term **Nahushasya Sheshah/नहुषस्य शेषः** implies the **remnants of the Five Tribes** or the **People of Nahusha** who survived the war or the **Leftover of the Five Races after the war**.

It is to be noted here that the Poet from **Atri** clan is interested in the **races of Nahusha only** and did not take the names of other tribes mentioned in the war hymn **Rv-7.18**.

Now moving to **Mandala-7** references, the verse **Rv-7.6,5** intimates us that the **Tribes of Nahusha** were forced to bring the tributes or gifts on the occasion of **Yajna**.

Five Tribes of Nahusha pay tributes to the Poet Vasistha.

Rv-7.6,5: *yo dehyo anamayad vadhasnairyo aryapatnīruṣasaścakāra |
sa nirudhyā nahuṣo yajvo agnirviśaścakre baliḥṛtaḥ saḥobhiḥ //*

यो देह्यो अनमयद वधस्त्रैर्यो अर्यपत्नीरुषसश्चकार । स निरुध्या नहुषो यज्वो अग्निर्विशश्चक्रे बलिहृतः सहोभिः ॥

Him who broke down the walls with deadly weapons, and gave the Mornings to a noble Husband,

Young Agni, who with conquering strength subduing the tribes of Nahusa made them bring their tribute.

The loss of War could have compelled the **People of Nahusha** to attend **Yajna** in a group **with their wives** and give gifts to the Priests. Surprisingly, here **Vasistha** has credited the attendance of the **Tribes of Nahusha** at the time of **Yajna** to God **Agni** and not to **Indra**. In all probabilities, above verse would have been composed after the **War of Ten Kings**.

3. Vasisthas request Asvins and Usha to pay attention to the lands of Five Tribes:

Being from the **class of Aryas**, now the Priests decided to call the **Five Tribes** for **Yajna** rite, and the latter responded to the invitation with the positive frame of mind. Through the composed **Poems of Praise**, now Poets started praying to **Rigvedic Deities** for the betterment of the **Five Tribes**. Following verses addressed to **Asvins** (**Rv-7.69,2** and **Rv-7.72,5**); and **Usha/Dawn** (**Rv-7.75,4** and **Rv-7.79,1**) convey the same.

Rv-7.69,2: *sa paprathāno abhi pañca bhūmā trivandhuro manasā yātu yuktaḥ /
viśo yena gachatho devayantīḥ kutrā cid yāmamaśvinā dadhānā ||*

Let it approach, yoked by the will, three-seated, extending far and wide over **fivefold beings**,
Whereon ye visit **God-adoring races**, bending your course whither ye will, O **Asvins**.

Rv-7.72,5: *ā paścātān nāsatyā purastādāśvinā yātamadharādudaktāt |
ā viśvataḥ pāñcajanya rāyā yūyaṃ pāta svastibhih sada nah ||*

Come from the west, come from the east, **Nasatya**s, come, **Asvins**, from below and from above us.
Bring wealth from all sides for the **Fivefold People**. Preserve us evermore, ye Gods, with blessings.

Rv-7.75,4: *eṣā syā yujānā parākāt pañca kṣitīḥ pari sadyo jighāti |
abhipaśyantī vayunā janānām divo duhitā bhuvanasyapatnī ||*

She yokes her chariot far away, and **swiftly visits the lands where the Five Tribes are settled**,
Looking upon the works and ways of mortals, **Daughter of Heaven**, the **world's Imperial Lady**.

Rv-7.79,1: *vyuṣā āvaḥ pathyā janānām pañca kṣitīrmānuṣīrbodhayantī |
susandṛghbhirukṣabhirbhānumaśred vi sūryo rodasī cakṣasāvaḥ ||*

Use of the terms like पञ्चभूमा/five lands; पाञ्चजन्येन/ five people; पञ्च क्षिती:/ five regions; जनानां पञ्च क्षिती/ the People of the five countries in the afore-mentioned verses manifests that the Poets from **Vasistha family** are serious about the newly developed relationship with the **Five Tribes of Nahusha**, and hence they exhibited their concern about the latter by asking the twin Gods **Asvins** to travel to the **lands of Five** (races) and protect the wealth of the **Five Regions**. Additionally, they also appealed to Goddess **Usha/Dawn** to go round the **Five Regions** and daily awaken the people who live in those **Five Places**.

This type of description is not found in any hymn of the **Mandala-2, 3, 4, and 6**.

4. Distinct historical features brought out by Vasistha while praising river Saraswati:

In **Mandala-7**, there are two hymns exclusively dedicated to river **Saraswati**. The most astonishing fact is, although the two separate battles were fought on the banks of two key rivers of Rigvedic Territory; **a. Parushni** (the major war in opposition to more than **Ten Kings**), and **b. Yamuna** (a battle against **Bheda** and his friends) that culminated in victory of the **Bharatas**, still the Poets from **Vasistha** clan **did not find time to glorify both rivers. Why is it so?**

Or, why did the **Vasisthas** waste their time and words to laud the **dry river Saraswati**?

Therefore, it is essential to find out the reasons behind the wilful neglect of the rivers **Parushni** and **Yamuna** and the biased attitude of the Poets towards river **Saraswati**.

Please take a close look at the verses taken from the hymns devoted to **Saraswati** [1].

Rv-6.61,4: *pra no devī sarasvatī vājebhirvājinīvatī | dhīnāmavitryavatu //*

May the divine **Sarasvati**, rich in her wealth, protect us well, furthering all *our thoughts with might*.

Rv-7.96,3: *bhadramid bhadra kṛṇavat sarasvatyakavārī cetati vājinīvatī |*

gṛṇānā jamadaghnivat stuvānā ca vasiṣṭhavat //

So may **Sarasvati** auspicious send good luck; she, rich in spoil, *is never niggardly in thought*,

When praised in Jamadagni's way and lauded as **Vasistha** lauds.

It is generally agreed and accepted by most of the Vedic Experts that **Mandala-6** was composed earlier to **Mandala-7**. Presence of some similar features like divine/auspicious; richness; pious thought stimulator etc. in above verses make the river very special being.

To understand the **psyche** of the members of Priestly Community, please take an intense look at the example given below.

“An innocent child of three years old is left in the gathering of 100 stunning ladies. But in the crowd, it searches for its **mother only**, as it has no interest in other 99 beautiful women”.

It means to say that **every new Rigvedic Poet**, emotionally built a **Child-Mother** relationship with river **Saraswati**. This is a very special thing in the history of mankind. It has been highlighted by **Mandala-2 Poet** in the verse **Rv-2.41,16** wherein, he has specifically called river **Saraswati** as the **best mother**. Similar trend is seen even in the **Mandala-10 Poem** (see verses **Rv-10.17,7 to 9**). The history of this relationship can be traced back to the era of ancestors of **pre-Rigvedic Rishis** who conceived **Rta/Cosmic laws**, the **first Principle of**

Vedic Philosophy on her banks. It means that, a long before the start of **Rigvedic Compositions**, the old Rishis considered river **Saraswati** as the **source of inspiration** for their **visionary thoughts**. Therefore, the generations of Poets even though lived far away from the banks of rain-fed river **Saraswati**, often recalled her and then felt very close to their hearts.

Now coming to the main point of presence of the historical references noticed in the hymns dedicated to **Saraswati**. Following two verses belonging to two separate hymns composed by Poet **Vasistha** do indicate the past and current state of river **Saraswati**.

a. Past condition of river Saraswati depicted in the verse Rv-7.95,2

RV-7,95,2: *ekācetat sarasvatī nadīnām śucīryatī giribhya ā samudrāt /*

rāyaścetanī bhuvanasya bhūrerghṛtaṃ payo duduhe nāhuṣāya ||

Pure in her course from mountains to the ocean, alone of streams Saraswati hath listened.

Thinking of wealth and the great world of creatures, **she poured for Nahusa her milk and fatness.**

In the above verse, the Poet from **Vasistha** family, during his visit to the **land of Purus**, but after the victory in the war, came to know that during the early period of **Nahusha's regime**, river **Saraswati alone** used to complete her course starting from the **mountain** means her place of origin to **sea** means the end point. Content of the verse **Rv-7.95,2** reveal the fact that unlike **Saraswati**, other major rivers of the adjoining regions such as **Sutudri, Vipas, Parushni, Vitasta, Asikni** (west flowing) and **Yamuna** (east flowing) were **not fortunate enough to pour their water directly into the sea**. It also means, once upon a time, **Ilaspade** region/up-stream part of river **Saraswati** used to receive very good rains.

b. Current situation of river Saraswati described in the verse Rv-7.96,2

Rv-7.96,2: *ubhe yat te mahinā śubhre andhasī adhikṣiyanti pūravaḥ /*

sā no bodhyavitrī marutsakhā coda rādho maghonām ||

When in the fullness of their strength the Purus dwell, Beauteous One, on thy two grassy banks,

Favour us thou who hast the Maruts for thy friends: **stir up the bounty of our chiefs.**

Similarly, in the **Puru's country**, **Vasistha** observes that the **Purus dwell** on the banks of river **Saraswati** only when they become **grassy**, means during **rainy season only**. In other words due to paucity of water in the river bed, after rainy season, they shift to some other place.

Though afore-mentioned verses tell us the contradictory stories, but the verse **Rv-7.96,2** surely communicates us about the ground reality of river **Saraswati** in the **place of Purus**.

Additionally, the Poet from **Vasistha** clan in the hymn **Rv-7.50** has described the living conditions prevailed in the **North-eastern part of Rigvedic Territory** when he stayed there for several months and moved from place to place in the area adjoining upstream part of river **Saraswati**, but after the victory of the **Bharatas** in the “**War of Ten Kings**” [1].

Hymn Rv-7.50 addressed to Mitra Varuna, Water, and Rivers

1: O **Mitra-Varuna**, guard and protect me here: let not that come to me which nests within and swells.

I drive afar the scorpion hateful to the sight: let not the winding worm touch me and wound my foot.

2: Eruption that appears upon the twofold joints, and that which overspreads the ankles and the knees,

May the refulgent **Agni** banish far away let not the winding worm touch me and wound my foot.

3: The poison that is formed upon the **Salmali**, that which is found in streams, that which the plants produce,

All this, may all the Gods banish and drive away: let not the winding worm touch me and wound my foot.

4: The steep declivities, the valleys, and the heights, the channels full of water, and the waterless

May those who swell with water, gracious Goddesses, never afflict us with the **Sipada disease**, May all the Rivers keep us free from **Simida**.

In the **verse-1** of the hymn **Rv-7.50**, the Poet requests **Mitra** and **Varuna** to keep away worms from the people. It means to say that at that time, the Composer was living in a locality where harmful insects/worms were present everywhere and as per the description, the Poet had wounded his foot and hence he appeals to Gods to do something so that his wound would not become dangerous. In the **verse-2**, the Poet prays **Agni** to keep away joint pain giving worms from his body. **Verse-3** indicates some plants/herbs have poisoned water bodies and also the **Shalmali** tree present in that area. In the **verse-4**, the Composer talks about the rivers of that region as having varied slope, width, and depth means they are not alike. **Some carry water** in them and **some go water-less**. He prays to the river Goddesses to bring **fresh water** to them continuously so that water borne diseases like **Sipada** and **Simida** would not occur in that area. In other words, in the **North-eastern** region, due to paucity of water, many people were suffering from the water borne diseases (some persons could be the patients of **elephant foot disease** (?)). Hence it can be said that **in the eastern part of Rigvedic Territory**, Poet **Vasistha** definitely witnessed problems faced by the residents due to water scarcity and also experienced some life-threatening health related issues there.

The fact is that, **Vasistha** could comment on the above features only due to his long duration halt in the North-eastern region, but subsequent to war. That is why, during the second phase of **Mandala-5**, the Priests decided to relocate themselves to **west of river Sindhu**.

D. Concluding Remarks:

A broad study of the Rigvedic hymns that mostly deal with the **War of Ten Kings** and then **Post-war Effects** on the subsequent Rigvedic compositions reveals following things.

- Prior to war, the *Five Tribes of Nahusha* did not believe in God Indra and Yajna ritual.
- The difference of opinion between the two warring factions of the “Aryas” is mainly due to Unacceptable Beliefs and Practices employed by the Rigvedic Priests who wanted to enforce them on the *descendants of king Nahusha*.
- When king Sudasa realised that the enemies were going to challenge him from three directions (east, west and north), he decided to retreat and moved further southward.
- Bharata King Sudasa appointed Vasistha as the Chief Priest with the sole intention to get the military support from the Trutsus.
- Sudasa won the war against more than ten kings only due to active participation of the Trutsus (the Poet has credited victory in the War of Ten kings to Indra).
- After triumph, Vasisthas performed *Dana-stuti Yajna* in the North-eastern region that was captured in the war and Sudasa gave several gifts to the Priests.
- After the success in war, the Priestly Community moved closer to the Leaders of the Five Tribes (the Aryas) and invited them to join Yajna ceremonies.
- Priests also prayed to the Deities of their imagination like *Asvins* and *Usha* to tour the countries of the Five Tribes and asked the Deities to look after their subjects.
- Due to the existence of the age-old “mother-children” relationship between river *Saraswati* and the ancestors of Priestly Community, the Poet Vasistha lauded only river *Saraswati* in the two composed hymns, but did not give similar treatment to *Parushni* and *Yamuna* on whose banks two separate battles were fought and won.
- After witnessing and experiencing bad living conditions in the North-eastern region of the Rigvedic Territory as well, the members of Priestly Community decided to move to western side of river *Sindhu* (during Mandala-5 period).

E. References:

1. “Rig Veda” (Bilingual), Translated by Ralph T. H. Griffith (1896) in PDF
2. Monier-Williams Dictionary.

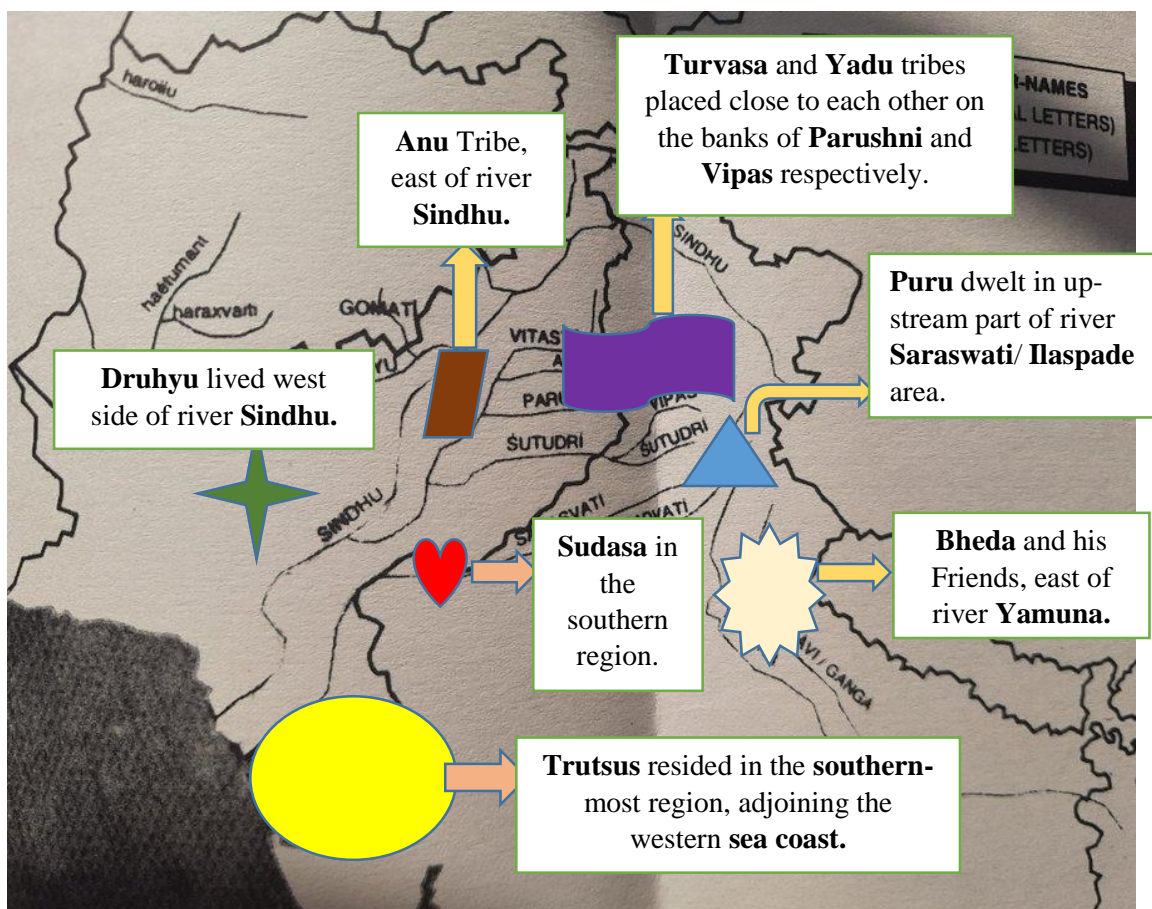
Understanding the Background of the Dāśarājña War

In true sense, the story of **Dāśarājña War** begins with the reference of **Mandala-3** verse **Rv-3.53,11** wherein, the **Poet** from **Visvamitra clan** has expressed his desire to conduct **Yajna rite** in the **Ilaspade region** that was under the control of the enemy of king **Sudasa/Bharatas**. In the same verse, he has also brought out the fact that in the three main directions (**east, west and north**) of the **Rigvedic Territory**, the **opponents of Bharatas** were in power, means they occupied those areas/states. Therefore, it can be inferred that, at that particular time, king **Sudasa** was placed in the **southern part of the Rigvedic Territory**.

Rv-3.53,11: Come forward, **Kusikas**, and be attentive; let loose **Sudas's** horse to win him riches.

East, west, and north, let the **King** slay the **foeman**, then at **earth's choicest place** perform **his worship**.

Probable geographical locations of king **Sudasa** and **his enemies** before the **War of Ten Kings** are shown in the following map of the **Harappan Civilization**.



Note: Information given in the above map is based on the content of the verse **R-3.53,11** and the war hymn **Rv-7.18**. Only **southern region** (mostly **desert area**) of **Rigvedic Territory** was without enemies.

Vasistha's entry in the Rigvedic World

In the Four Early Mandalas (Mandala-2, 3, 4 and 6), there is no reference of the involvement of **Vasistha** or his ancestors in the activities of **Yajna** ritual. It means, on the **Vedic Platform**, **Vasistha** arrived very late, probably just before the period of **Mandala-7**.

Now a new question crops up, why did king **Sudasa** appoint **Vasistha** as the **Main Priest** before the **War of Ten Kings/Dasha-Rajana**? Verse **Rv-7.33,6** provides the answer.

Rv-7.33,6: *daṇḍāived goajanāsa āsan parichinnā bharatā arbhakāsaḥ /
abhavacca puraetā vasiṣṭha ādit trtsūnām viśo aprathanta ||*

Like sticks and staves wherewith they drive the cattle, **stripped bare**, the **Bharatas were found defenceless**; **Vasistha then became their chief and leader**; then widely, **were the Trtsus' clans extended**.

As mentioned in the verse **Rv-7.33,6**; possibly when the **Bharatas** tried to move northwards to capture **Ilaspade region**, they were beaten by some undefined tribe (most likely **Sudasa** was defeated by one of the **Five Tribes of Nahusha**) in a local battle. Therefore, to take revenge of his loss in a battle, **Sudasa** desperately needed military support from some friendly warrior tribe to take on the enemies. Hence keeping in mind the up-coming major war, then the king **Sudasa** decided to appoint **Vasistha** as the **Royal Priest of the Bharatas** so that the **Trutsus** would give military aid to him.

It is most likely that **Vasistha** was known to the members of the Royal **Trutsu Family**. As **Sudasa** wanted to take advantage of **Vasistha's** close relation with the **Trutsus**, he made **Vasistha** as the **Head Priest** so that the **Trutsus** would extend military support to him. In reality, **Vasistha** acted as a linkman between **Sudasa** and **Trutsu**.

Unusual Story of Birth of Poet Vasistha (senior)

Poet from **Vasistha** clan in the verse **Rv-7.33,11** has mysteriously described that **Vasistha** (senior) was born to **Urvashi** (here assumed to be a beautiful woman of a foreign country) and **Maitra-Varuna** (a **Brahmin/ Arya?** Name of his father?), possible from a love affair. This can happen only when someone from the Indian Sub-continent visits other country either for trade and commerce purpose or on the military expedition or to promote ancient

culture there, for which a person required to stay on the foreign land for a longer duration. Hence here it is assumed that when **father of Vasistha** visited a foreign region like **Mesopotamia**, he would have fallen in love with a gorgeous girl there.

Rv-7.33,11: *utāsi maitrāvaruṇo vasiṣṭhorvaśyā brahman manaso.adhi jātah /*

drapsam skannaṃ brahmaṇā daivyena viśve devāḥ puṣkare tvādadanta ||

Born of their love for Urvasi, Vasistha thou, priest, art son of **Varuna and Mitra**;

And as a fallen drop, in heavenly fervour, all the Gods laid thee on a **lotus-blossom**.

The Poet from **Vasistha clan** has added twist to already confusing story, when he mentioned in the two verses of hymn **Rv-7.88** addressed to **Varuna**, about the journey performed by **Vasistha** in a **vessel/boat probably to reach the main land**. Verse **Rv-7.88,3** informs us that **Vasistha** travelled a long distance in a boat (with his father?) and as a first time traveller, happily enjoyed **oscillations of the boat** caused due to the waves of sea water while crossing the sea (Poet has described a practical feature experienced in a sea journey).

Rv-7.88,3: *ā yad ruhāva varuṇasca nāvaṃ pra yat samudramīrayāvamadhyam |*

adhi yadapāṃ snubhiṣcarāva pra preṅkha īṅkhayāvahai śubhe kam ||

आ यद रुहाव वरुणश्च नावं पर यत समुद्रमीरयावमध्यम | अधि यदपां सनुभिश्चराव पर परेङ्ख ईङ्ख्यावहै शुभे कम ||

When **Varuna** and I embark together and urge **our boat** into **the midst of ocean**,

We, when we ride over ridges of the waters, will **swing within that swing and there be happy**.

Verse **Rv-7.88,4** conveys us that as if, **God Varuna** placed **Vasistha** in a **vessel/boat**, who then arrived in a place where he became **Rishi** first and then the **Sage-singer**.

Rv-7.88,4: *vasiṣṭhaṃ ha varuṇo nāvvyādhād ṛṣiṃ cakāra svapā mahobhiḥ /*

stotāraṃ vipraḥ sudinatve ahnām yān nu dyāvastatanan yāduṣāsaḥ ||

वसिष्ठं ह वरुणो नाव्याधाद र्षिं चकार सवपा महोभिः | सतोतारं विप्रः सुदिनत्वे अह्नां यान नु दयावस्ततनन यादुषासः ||

Varuna placed **Vasistha** in the vessel, and deftly with his might made him a **Rsi**.

When days shone bright the **Sage made him a singer**, while the heavens broadened and the Dawns were lengthened.

On the basis of information given in the **above three verses**, here it is assumed that **Vasistha**, the **founder of the clan** was born in a different country to a foreign lady (**Urvashi**) when his father (a warrior Arya or a Brahmin?) had gone to that place most likely with some

known traders. After spending early years there, **Vasistha**, then came back to **Indian Sub-continent** by performing journey in a boat. Due to his hard work/single minded devotion, he went on to become a **Rishi/ famous thinker** or **an enlightened person** first and subsequently, he earned the name as **Visionary Poet cum Singer**. It means, senior **Vasistha** was a new entrant in the field of **Vedic Philosophy** as in **Rigved**, there is no proper known record of his ancestry.

Considering his closeness to **Trutsus**, and on the basis of information given in the verse **Rv-7.83,4**; before joining king **Sudasa's camp**, probably **Vasistha** was one of the **Priests of Trutsus kingdom** (*satyā trtsūnāmabhavat purohitih* / सत्या तृत्सूनामभवत्पुरोहितिः).

This is because, **Vasistha** when arrived from a foreign land in a vessel/boat, actually reached his **father's country** that is nothing but the country of **Trutsus**, means the seacoast of modern-day **Gujarat** state.

It is strange but fact that, by naming **Vasistha** as the Royal Priest, **Sudasa** made the **Trutsus** to join the **War of Ten Kings**. It was a well thought out plan of king **Sudasa** that bore the fruits of success. Hence king **Sudasa's move** should be taken as the **masterstroke** that **completely changed the power equation of the Rigvedic Territory**. In all probabilities, **Trutsus** would be having a bigger military force than the **Five Tribes of Nahusha**. And that is why, the **Five Tribes** would have requested other tribe leaders like **Pakhtas, Bhalanas, Alinas, Visanins** and **Shivas** who resided on the North or Western borders of Rigvedic Territory to help them in the up-coming war.

Please note that in all three War Hymns (**Rv-7.18**; **Rv-7.33**; and **Rv-7.83**) along with king **Sudasa**, the Poets from **Vasistha** clan have treated **Trutsus** as the **real warriors**.

It is also true that on the platform of **Vedic Poetry**, **Vasistha** was the **newcomer** as his ancestors did not belong to the well-known families of old Rishis like **Bhrigu, Angirasa** and **Kushika** etc.